

COLORADO RIVER RECOVERY PROGRAM  
FY 2003 & 2004 ANNUAL PROJECT REPORT

RECOVERY PROGRAM  
PROJECT NUMBER: 67

I. Project Title: Steamboat Lake Water Lease

II. Principal Investigator:  
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III. Project Summary:

In 1992, the Recovery Program identified a need to secure storage water in the Yampa River Basin for late summer flow augmentation. Colorado Division of Parks (Parks) secured a change of the water right decree for Steamboat Lake in 1997, which recognized the use of water for instream flows. With the change decree in place, the last obstacle to leasing water from Steamboat Lake was surmounted, and a lease was executed on April 17, 1997, between Parks, Colorado Water Conservation Board, and the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service). A lease price of \$16.00 per acre-foot for 2,000 acre-feet of water was negotiated for the 5-year term of the lease. When the original lease expired in 2000 Parks notified the Recovery Program that they were willing to negotiate a new 5 year lease but the cost would be increased to \$40 per acre-foot of water. Negotiation began in 2000 but when no agreement had been reached by late summer of 2001 Colorado Department of Natural Resources and the Recovery Program extended the original agreement 1 year with a simple letter agreement. A 1-year letter agreement was also negotiated in 2002 unfortunately the summer of 2002 turned out to be an extremely dry, with no base flows for the Steamboat Lake water to ride on, there was considerable doubt that any of the Steamboat Lake water would get to Critical Habitat so no releases were request or contracted from Steamboat Lake in 2002. A 1- year letter agreement was also developed for 2003 subject to be funded fund by Reclamation. The letter agreement did not meet Reclamations contracting standards and in the slate summer of 2004 a 5-year lease negotiated to cover the period 2004 to 2009. Funds were also included in the new lease agreement to cover water released in 2003.

IV. Study Schedule: Initial year - 1997, Final year - 2009.

V. Relationship to RIPRAP: Yampa River Action Plan I.B.2.a.(1)(b)  
Lease 2,000 acre-feet to augment later summer flows.

VI. Accomplishments of FY 2003- 2004 Tasks and Deliverables, Discussion of Initial Findings and Shortcomings:

Water year 2003 was another dry year on the Yampa River and throughout the entire State of Colorado. The Service established a flow target of 96 cfs at Maybell and 1,687

acre feet of water was released to support the target.

2004 was also a dryer type year on the Yampa River and the Service established a flow target of 96 cfs at Maybell and 1,367 acre feet of water was released to support the target.

VII. Recommendations:

Lease discussions should be terminated if determined when water from Elkhead reservoir become available in 2007.

VIII. Project Status:

After 3 years of negotiations a 5 year lease is now in place and funding can be made available to Parks for 2003 and 2004.

IX. FY 2003 Budget Status:

A. Funds Provided:	\$80,000
B. Funds Expended:	<u>\$67,480</u>
C. Difference:	\$12,520

FY 2004 Budget Status:

A. Funds Provided:	\$80,000
B. Funds Expended:	<u>\$54,680</u>
C. Difference:	\$25,320

X. Status of Data Submission: Not applicable

XI.	Signed: <u>George Smith</u>	<u>November 10, 2004</u>
	Principal Investigator	Date